The traditional approaches failed to analyse the political phenomenon empirically. Therefore an humble effort was made by the political scientist to study its subject on scientific lines by borrowing methodology from natural sciences. Thus behaviouralist movement came into being, which gave emphasis on quantification in order to build a theory of political science. In the process of making scientific theory, the first problem of political science was with the location of its unit of analysis. The notion of individual as independent social unit, so popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, is now viewed as affirmation of moral principles, than description of facts. The goals of individual can not pursued apart from the association with others who share them and are willing to act on them. In all societies, the individuals relationship with other is mediated and expressed through groups rather than direct personal contact and experience.

The specialization of labour, emergence of differentiated economic structure, commercialization or market economy, thrown up various reconciable and irreconciable interests and led to formation of large number of groups.

Pressure group may be defined as formally organized group of people, sharing common interest that tries to influence government and
political parties, particularly the ruling parties, for attainment of its goal.

In order to pursue its goal, the pressure groups facilitate legislators and administrator with technical information, not easily available. Pressure groups invent and initiate policy. With the emergence of mass media, pressure groups manage to flow information between government and governed.

The most important thing about pressure groups is that they are self conscious. This means members of groups perceive important differences between "we" and "they".

Despite the existence of large number of pressure group studies, the confusion about the nomenclature of the phenomenon still continues to persist. The term of like "pressure group" "interest group" "private organizations", "lobbies", "organized groups" and "catalytic groups" have been used to describe the same very phenomenon. But keeping in view, the popularity of term in India, we have preferred to use the term "pressure group" in our study.

Apart from confusion about the nomenclature, there is no universal consensus over the categorization of pressure groups. The scholars of each country, categorize the various kinds of pressure groups differently. Broadly, we have accepted four categories of pressure groups. These are institutional, associational, non-associational and anomic pressure groups. The institutional and associational pressure groups are
prevalent in developed countries, whereas a curious mixture of associational and non-associational are prevalent in developing countries, particularly in India. The interest articulation function may be manifest or latent, specific or diffuse, general or particular, instrumental or affective in style. The basis of recruitment of group leaders may be ascriptive or ascribed.

The literature on pressure groups deals largely with the cause of origine of pressure groups, pressure techniques, organizational structure and channel of access adopted by different pressure groups. Accordingly various hypothesis and theories were propounded by mainly western scholars. Among them, Homeostatic Mechanism Hypothesis propounded by David Truman, By-product and special interest theory developed by Olson, structural functional approach by Almond and Powell, Benefit Exchange theory by R.H. Salisbury and H.H. Wilson and cultural approach by F.G. Castle, H.E. Stein, E.L. Brown, V.L. Allen, Frank L. Wilson. These approaches are unidimensional in nature. They partially explain the politics of pressure groups phenomenon. Although, neither of these approaches are all exclusive nor all inclusive. These approaches in fact overlap each others. The politics of pressure group phenomenon are multi-dimensional in nature. Moreover these approaches are applicable to most of the west democracies.

The Indian context is quite different from the western developed countries due to prevalent illiteracy, inadequacy of means of
transportation and communication, lack of commercialization and industrialization. Indian traditions and ethos give different picture and no cohesive, coherent explanation can be given. The fusion of associational and non-associational pressure groups made it peculiar.

India is mainly agricultural produce country. More than eighty percent of population is directly or indirectly engaged in this sector. Introduction of new far in technology and consequent of monetization of agricultural activities under the ‘green revolution’ signaled the agrarian transformation, unequal term of trade between rural and urban sectors became major contradiction characterizing this phase and farmer’s movement arose seeking redressal and discrimination. The latest phase of agrarian transformation is signified by shift of farmer organization from non electoral politics of pressure groups to active participation. But the different cropping pattern, uneven development of infrastructural facilities varied climate and topography, different traditional ethos and culture inhibited the cohesive unified farmer’s organization though many political parties patronized various farmer’s organization right from national liberation movement.

Himachal Pradesh is by and large a mountainous state covering area of 55.67 lakh hectares. In state nearly 1/10 of total geographical area is under cultivation and of this nearly 1/6 is under horticulture crops. Due to difficult geographical conditions a large part of area under crops remain devoid of irrigation facilities. Thus, the best alternative for
the state is to utilize its natural resources for higher pay off crops. Horticulture in the state has now become business proposition and fruits and vegetables are grown on commercial purposes.

Total area under apple in 1960-61 was only 30,25 hectares which has increased to 75469 hectares in 1994-95. In 1960-61 the total production of the apple was 12,000 tonnes which increased to 276586 tonnes in 1995-96. The total state income in 1993-94 at current price amounted to 6519 crore, out of which the share of apple income was 29706.24 lakhs. In 2000-2001 the apple industry business amounted to 8000 crores.

On 25th January 1971, Himachal Pradesh became the eighteenth state of union of India by merging the hilly region of Punjab i.e. Kangra, Una and Hamirpur. This region was nurtured in different culture and political climate. Topographically, the merged area was not suitable for apple growing, though lately citrus fruits are being grown in this region. Thus different cropping pattern and history paved way for fanning politics of sub-regionalism in the state. The agro-climate condition required for apple cultivation are suited in old Himachal areas districts like Shimla, Kullu, Kinnaur, Mandi, Chamba, Sirmour, Lahaul-Spiti, Solan. Though Kullu district was part of erstwhile Punjab but culturally is more kin to old Himachal areas.

The increase in apple production created problems of marketing, transportation, inadequate points of supplies for the distribution of
material inputs, weak or virtually non-existent co-operative organization, non-acquisition of scientific technique for the maintenance of orchards. At the same time, a deadly fungal disease known as “Apple Scab” damaged the crop completely and apple growers were even unable to make their both ends meet. Thus loosely organized Apple Growers Association came up in the politics of Himachal Pradesh 1983.

There is no relevant study on pressure groups in Himachal Pradesh in general and Apple Growers Association in particular. Apart from apple growers facing acute crises, the apple is the major commercial crop of Himachal Pradesh and it is grown in 22 constituencies out of (68) constituencies and assumed a political significance.

In 1977, in Himachal Pradesh Sh. Shanta Kumar of Janta Party took over as first non-congress Chief Minister. He came from merged areas (lower region). He has alleged the misusing of state funds by congress government to pamper the apple growing areas i.e. old areas (upper region) and exploited regionalism in favour of his partly in 1977 election. Thus infrastructure development in the old areas (upper region) was halted. The discriminatory attitude of Shanta Kumar added more woes to already hard pressed growers. Again in 1983 election, “Scab Scandel” was greatly exploited by the BJP. Sh. Shanta Kumar was out of power and played regional card very well, as BJP was fully convinced that apple growers will support the congress party. In this
election, the strong demand for equal and matching share in form of subsidies were raised from lower region. The discrimination of lower region card played by Shanta Kumar brought B.J.P. Party as many as 31 seats out of 68 seats of legislative assembly. Apart from acute crises faced by apple growers, the role of various political parties in this regard also necessitated the origin of Apple Growers Association in 1983.

Initially, the apple growers and related to fruit industry organized themselves at tehsil level. There were mushroom growth of associations, like Saw Mills Association, the “truck owners Union” Fruit Growers Association etc. In 1986, these growers organized on district level. It was only in June 1990, that growers took positive step to form a state level Association and included other fruit and vegetable Growers. It was tactical move at apple growers to save itself from alleged baises. The constitution of AGA was framed, the enshrined aim and objective was to promote and safeguard the best interest of those engage in fruit and other farming. But the apple grower association has very low level of institutionalization. It is not a well-knit organization. The organization structure of the association as per its constitution leaves an impression that association does not give importance to formal structure and minute details. There are no rules in regard to block, tehsil and district organization. The apple growing district like Mandi, Sirmour and Solan do not have any block, tehsil and district level organisations and none of the office-bearer are from these districts. The funds are collected, as and
when the association needed. Proper accounts are not maintained and
nor they are read in annual meetings of the association. There are
instances that the meeting of general body, executive body and
governing body are not held for more than years. These bodies were
generally convened during the course of agitation by the association or
in preparation of thereof.

The association launched two agitations, one in 1987 and another
in 1990. After that no mass agitation was led by the AGA, though
occasional press release did appear in the newspapers. In these two
agitation, the AGA has not adopted well thought strategy. The apple
growers flocked to Shimla and were canned by the police. The members
of AGA are predominately from Shimla and Kullu districts.

One of the objective of this research was to know what type of
people join pressure groups. Because the pressure groups do not
operate in vacum. Their behavior is conditioned by wider socio-
economic and political realities. The following are the conclusions of
socio-economic background of the AGA. Religion wise AGA members and
office bearers are Hindus. Only senior Vice-President is Christian. In
term of caste, Rajput are more than sixty per cent of total members,
followed by Brahmin (20.72%), S.C.(15.76%) and S.T. (2.25%).
Surprisingly in term of land holdings, and education, there is hardly a
difference between upper caste members and the lower caste members.
The middle age group (36.55) are more enthusiastic about associational
activities than the youngest and elder people. No doubt, youngest age group is more educated than eldest and middle aged group. The association is dominated by male, married and vernacular elites. Majority of unmarried members are younger lot comparatively more educated and come from Rajput community. More over all the office holders are married. The ninety five per cent of Apple Growers Association (AGA) members are educated and interestingly the illiterates are from the S.C. and hailed from the largest apple growing districts i.e. Shimla and Kullu. In term of occupation majority of members are only horticulturists whereas 13.51 per cent member, besides owning orchards, are in government jobs.

The general notion in rural India is, larger the land holdings, the greater the participation in associational activities. But our finding does not confirm this hypothesis. In term of land holdings, marginal and small farmers constitute the majority in total membership of AGA.

Interestingly, the least income group constitute only 2.25% of the total membership. Within least income group majority of members are S.C. followed by Rajput. No Brahmin member figured in least income group. The income range of bulk of the members i.e. 52% are between Rupees 32000 to 100000. To our surprise half of the large income members are small farmers, rest of them are semi medium farmer and medium farmers.
The dilemma of capitalist mode of production is lesser the land holdings and more the expenditure and larger the land holdings the lesser the expenditure. The dilemma is acute more so in the absence of co-operative institutions operating in the apple growing areas. This is because the cost of infrastructure input commodities are less, as compared to, when these commodities are bought in less quantity.

Only ¼ of members of AGA are under debt. Most of the debtor members owed loans to co-operatives and landing institutions. In all the cases of indebtedness, the members had taken loan for purchasing horticulture implements or inputs, house construction and day to day expenditures.

Further our findings concludes the members, who have property in urban areas and share other business are highly mobilized in associational activities, even though their other share in business activities may conflict the interest of apple growers. This is because these members want to get best of the both of professions. Being a active member of Apple Growers Association, the members with other share in business want to insure that no such action or resolution is passed which is contrary to the interests of their other business.

As we have noted earlier that AGA is imbibed with the politics of sub-regionalism, although AGA is officially unaffiliated with any political party. But its members did have attracted more members with Congress since 1980’s. Right from 1980 parliamentary elections, then in 1982
state Assembly elections, further in 1985 state assembly elections, again in 1989 parliamentary elections and even 1990 state assembly elections when the B.J.P. won 2/3 seats in the state assembly, more than sixty per cent of AGA member voted for Congress party, thirty per cents of its total members voted for B.J.P. and around two to three per cent of its members voted for CPI(M). Only fluctuation was that 4 per cent of AGA member's preference to Congress was reduced and three per cent preference to B.J.P. was increased in 1990 elections and 1993 elections. The least supporter of BJP was from Shimla and Chamba district. In term of caste, 40 per cent of BJP supporter are Rajput, 30 per cent are Brahmin, 24 per cent are SC and 4 per cent are S.T.

The agents of mobilization were nurtured in congress culture historically and the declaration of support price, subsidies by the successive congress government were the main reasons of the members of AGA preference to Congress. In contrast to this, B.J.P. Government slashed down the rate of support price and cut down the subsidies. Not only this, the BJP Government suppressed the peaceful agitation for the cause of its demand spearheaded by AGA, with iron hand in 1990. In this agitation three apple growers were killed by the police firing.

Eighty per cent of the total members of AGA are holding positions in Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zila Parishad, Mortgage bank, co-operative bank cooperative societies and fruit growers boards and marketing agency. The Pradhan Panchayat and local leaders are the
main agents of mobilizations. The role of political parties in regard to mobilization are negligible. Surprisingly, the majority of members of AGA do not discredit any political party attitudes regard to demands of AGA. Further our finding concludes that the AGA was neither established by unsuccessful politician nor dominated by rich farmers. More than fifty per cent of members of AGA do agree that caste and region do play role in the politics of association. More than seventy per cent of members of AGA do attend the general meeting when ever is called. Seventeen per cent of the total Rajput members, 19 percent of total Brahmin members, 28 per cent of the total S.C. members do not participate in the meeting.

An humble effort was also made to evaluate the performance of AGA and data was also collected because of longevity and effectiveness of the association depends up on the perception (false or real) of its members. More than seventy per cent of its members agree that association has been successful in conceding its demand, therefore, they want to continue its membership and predict its future as better. Among the members, who feel that AGA has failed in conceding its demands from the government, the majority of these members are highly qualified, only 25 per cent of its members have studied up to intermediate.

The majority of members those who do not want continue its membership are other than Shimla district. Because, these districts are
not represented in the executive body. The level of mobilization is very low in these districts.

Similarly, absolute majority of its members have full faith in its leadership. It has been observed that resentment against leadership of AGA are more in Kullu and Kinnaur district.

Even after the years of dullness of AGA activities sixty per cent of its members feel that association has grown stronger. More than seventy five per cent of its members confirmed that association has been effective in negotiation and bargaining. The interestingly among the members who are doubtful about the effectiveness of AGA, majority of them are highly educated.

Lastly, the 40 per cent of members of AGA, suggested meetings as mode of mobilization of AGA, 20 per cent of its members recommended Dharna, equal percentage of membership prescribed strike as mode of mobilization. Further majority of its members wanted lobbying at ministers, bureaucracy, parliamentary/assembly and press for successful functioning of AGA. In regard to success, the majority of its member attributed to genuine demands, only more than twenty per cent attribute success to unity of members.